

March 16 2013

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF CT HB 6519, An Act Concerning the Labeling of Genetically Engineered Food

Submitted by: Tara Cook-Littman, 160 Stella Lane, Fairfield, CT

My name is Tara Cook-Littman and I am most importantly a mother of three young children, I am a former NYC Prosecutor, and I represent the CT Right To Know GMO Coalition. We have come together to demand our right to know what is in our food. Such a simple request - the right to know what is in our food so we can choose whether or not to feed our families GMOs. A right the citizens of 62 other countries, including all of Europe, Japan, China, New Zealand and Australia already enjoy. But not here in America where we are shopping totally blind.

The GMO labeling movement began when a group of dedicated mothers, fathers, grandparents, farmers, and health professionals joined together in common purpose to educate their friends and neighbors about GMOs and the need for transparent labeling. Today the CT Right To Know GMO coalition has over 175 members, including organizations, restaurants, farms, and businesses all standing together to ask you, our legislators, to support our right to know. As I reflect back on this past year I am filled with gratitude for all the dedicated advocates fighting for our food freedom and for the knowledgeable, supportive legislators we are so fortunate to have here in CT.

Today you will hear from top international scientists, business owners, farmers, chefs, parents, and health care professionals. By the end of today, all your questions will be answered and the myths spread by the opposition to GMO labeling will be dispelled.

It has been suggested that state mandated GMO labeling laws are unconstitutional, when in fact, there have been no such definitive rulings. One of the arguments from those that oppose GMO labeling is that state mandated labeling would violate the First Amendment by infringing on the merchants' commercial free speech rights. In plain English, the industry that benefits from the sale of GMOs, thinks their right to keep us in the dark about what we are eating, so they can continue to profit, trumps our right to know what we are feeding our families. Do the legislators of the Constitution State actually believe that the framers intended the First Amendment to afford corporations such protections? To the contrary, our framers intent in writing the constitution was to protect the American citizenry from the very abuses of power evidenced in the lack of transparent labeling of our food. As long as the Connecticut legislature can show that the GMO labeling law is reasonably related to numerous legitimate state interests, including health of its' citizens and protecting the environment, the law would be upheld as constitutional. Whether HB 6519 will survive a

constitutional attack, is really up to all of you. What is your intent in supporting HB 6519? Please be sure to put your intent on the record.

While the jury may still be out as to whether we can say definitively that GMOs are harming us, I have read enough studies that raise serious doubts in my mind as to whether GMOs should be consumed by anyone. And remember, GMOs were NEVER proven safe by our own Government. Before anyone asks us to prove they are dangerous, go ask our own government to prove they are safe and they will not be able to provide you with one government funded long term study proving they are safe. Our government has failed to protect us. In fact, GMOs were exempt from testing because they were deemed generally recognized as safe (GRAS), many would say illegally.

"GRAS" is an acronym for the phrase Generally Recognized As Safe. Under sections 201(s) and 409 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (the Act), any substance that is intentionally added to food is a food additive, that is subject to premarket review and approval by FDA, unless the substance is generally recognized, among qualified experts, as having been adequately shown to be safe under the conditions of its intended use, or unless the use of the substance is otherwise excluded from the definition of a food additive.

Under sections 201(s) and 409 of the Act, and FDA's implementing regulations in 21 CFR 170.3 and 21 CFR 170.30, the use of a food substance may be GRAS either through scientific procedures or, for a substance used in food before 1958, through experience based on common use in food.

Under 21 CFR 170.30(b), general recognition of safety through scientific procedures requires the same quantity and quality of scientific evidence as is required to obtain approval of the substance as a food additive and ordinarily is based upon published studies, which may be corroborated by unpublished studies and other data and information.

Under 21 CFR 170.30(c) and 170.3(f), general recognition of safety through experience based on common use in foods requires a substantial history of consumption for food use by a significant number of consumers.

GE foods never met either of the criteria required to be granted GRAS status. Even the FDA's own scientists believed that GMOs could pose potential harm to human health and warned their superiors that GMOs required additional testing before ending up on our dinner plates. It is clear that there will be no action from our federal government at this time because the industry that benefits from the sale of GMOs, has too much power in Washington. States should not wait for the Federal government to act, but rather must protect its' citizens today.

CT is a member of the Coalition of States for GMO Labeling, a national movement of the grass roots campaigns across this country that is 37 states strong and growing. CT will not stand alone. In CT, we gain momentum and strength every day as more CT residents learn what GMOs are and become angered at how they have been kept in the dark. Do CT legislators want to be remembered as heroes who put the rights of it's citizens above corporate interests or as the legislators who allowed corporate interests to squash our right to know? The answer is yet to be seen, but either way rest assured, we will remember. No corporation has a right to decide what is best for my three beautiful children. I am their mother and I am responsible for doing what is best for them - please give me the tools to make that choice and support HB 6519.

Thank you

Right to Know GMO
Coalition Sign On List

	Organization	City (If local)
State	350CT	
State	CT Blues Society	
State	CT NOFA	
State	CT Public Interest Research Group (ConnPIRG)	
State	GMO Free CT	
State	Inter Religious Eco-Justice Network	
State	Joan Fox Juice Plus+	
State	Sierra Club, CT Chapter	
State	Simply Healing	
State	Toxics Action Center	
Local	Shayna B's Gluten Free Bakery	Ashford
Local	Ellen Palmer Wellness	Avon
Local	Garden of Light Natural Foods	Avon
Local	Ilone House Interiors	Avon
Local	Hines & Associates, Landscape Architectural Services	Bethel
Local	Bright Yellow Farm	Bloomfield
Local	Carol Monnerat LLC Artisan Truffles	Branford
Local	Bloodroot	Bridgeport
Local	Renaissance Farm	Burlington
Local	Flatbread Canton	Canton
Local	Chaplin Farms	Chaplin
Local	Chester Charter, Inc	Chester
Local	Circle of Friends Montessori	Chester
Local	Just Food	Chester
Local	River Tavern	Chester
Local	Landmark Natural Foods & Cafe	Columbia
Local	Landmark Natural Foods & Cafe	Columbia
Local	IFoundFitness	Deep River
Local	The Pet's Choice	Deep River
Local	Thomas Metcalf, PE, LS	Deep River
Local	Laughing Earth Gardens	East Haddam
Local	A Therapeutic Touch	East Hampton
Local	Bakery on Main	East Hartford
Local	Conduit Center	East Hartford
Local	Right Tu Health	East Hartford
Local	Living Well Yoga	East Haven
Local	Quality Home Renovations and Remodeling, Inc.	East Lyme
Local	Tonic Design House	East Lyme
Local	White Gate Farm	East Lyme
Local	Gilbertie's Herb Gardens	Easton
Local	New Boston Beef	Fabyan
Local	Camillo Health and Fitness	Fairfield
Local	Catch A Healthy Habit	Fairfield
Local	Conscious Decisions	Fairfield
Local	Fairfield Green Drinks	Fairfield
Local	Gourganics Salsa	Fairfield

As of 3/14/13

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Local	Pinpoint Fitness	Fairfield
Local	Dee's One Smart Cookie	Glastonbury
Local	Greater Glastonbury for Peace & Justice	Glastonbury
Local	Organic Moms of Glastonbury	Glastonbury
Local	So G Coffee Shop	Glastonbury
Local	Granby Village Health	Granby
Local	Windham Gardens	Granby
Local	Keifer's Kettle Korn & Italian Ice	Griswaldo
Local	Foodworks	Guilford
Local	Alchemy Cafe	Hartford
Local	Billings Forge Community Works	Hartford
Local	Billings Forge Farmers Market	Hartford
Local	Center for Serenity	Hartford
Local	Eat The Sunlight	Hartford
Local	Fire N Spice	Hartford
Local	Green Sanctuary Sub-Council Unitarian Society of Hartford	Hartford
Local	Gresczyk Farms LLC	Hartford
Local	Hartford Food System	Hartford
Local	Hartford Prints!	Hartford
Local	Heights of Wellness	Hartford
Local	Hispanic Health Council	Hartford
Local	MarWin Farm	Hartford
Local	Occupy Hartford	Hartford
Local	Rodger Phillips Farm	Hartford
Local	Marble Valley Farm	Kent
Local	Aiki Farms	Ledyard
Local	Atwood Farm	Litchfield
Local	Laurel Ridge Farms, LLC	Litchfield
Local	Hummus Yummy Hummy	Lyme
Local	New Beginnings Health Coaching	Lyme
Local	New Mercies	Lyme
Local	New Mercies Farm	Lyme
Local	Sustainable Living Committee, Unitarian Universalist Society East	Manchester
Local	Unitarian Universalist Society East, Sustainable Living Committee	Manchester
Local	Swift Farms	Mansfield
Local	It's Only Natural Market	Middletown
Local	Sow Fresh Organics	Middletown
Local	18th Century Purity Farm	Moosup
Local	Winvian Restaurant	Morris
Local	Advantage Personal Training	Mystic
Local	CitySeed	New Haven
Local	Claire's Cornercopia	New Haven
Local	Northeast Clean Power	New Haven
Local	Bean and Leaf Cafe	New London
Local	Blissworks Yoga & Healing Arts	New London
Local	Earth Charter Community of the Lower Valley, Inc.	New London
Local	Eastern Connecticut Community Gardens Assoc.	New London
Local	FRESH New London	New London

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Local	Grounded Living Nutrition & Wellness, LLC	New London
Local	PBJ Farm	New London
Local	Thames Valley Local Produce	New London
Local	Sullivan Farm	New Milford
Local	New Haven Farms	NewHaven
Local	Newington Yoga Center	Newington
Local	Niantic Acupuncture & Family Wellness	Niantic
Local	Fun Organic Shirts	North Granby
Local	Natural Family Health	North Haven
Local	Live Green Connecticut!	Norwalk
Local	Valchris farm	Oakdale
Local	The English Lady Organically Inspired Landscape Designs	Old Lyme
Local	Wertheimer & Associates LLC	Old Lyme
Local	On Point Acupuncture & Chinese Herbal Medicine	Old Saybrook
Local	The Children's Tree Montessori School	Old Saybrook
Local	Old Solar Farm	Oxford
Local	Beverlee Gayus MS LLC	Ridgefield
Local	Garden of Ideas	Ridgefield
Local	Homefront Farmers	Ridgefield
Local	Sweet Sage Bakery	Rockfall
Local	Colgan Farm LLC	Simsbury
Local	Karma Construction	Simsbury
Local	Maple Knoll Farm	Somersville
Local	Thompson Street Farm	South Glastonbu
Local	Thompson Street Farm	South Glastonbu
Local	Orchard Valley Garden Club	Southington
Local	Bob White Farm	Stafford
Local	Martinez Caretaker Service	Stamford
Local	Interior Connections LLC	Stonington
Local	Sustainable Health and Wellness	Tariffville
Local	Zezoa's Vegetables	Terryville
Local	Nature's Grocer	Vernon
Local	Sustainable Food Systems	Wallingford
Local	Community Table	Washington
Local	Waldingfield Farm	Washington
Local	Holcomb Farm	West Granby
Local	The Green Teahouse, Inc.	West Hartford
Local	West Hartford Yoga	West Hartford
Local	Two Angry Moms	Weston
Local	Double L Market	Westport
Local	Wakeman Town Farm	Westport
Local	Westport Farmers Market	Westport
Local	Carbone Chiropractic	Wethersfield
Local	Comstock Ferre	Wethersfield
Local	Holistic Health Care Practitioner	Wethersfield
Local	CLICK	Willimantic
Local	Clothworks	Willimantic
Local	Willimantic Food Co-Op	Willimantic

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